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ABSTRACT

Yup'ik Head Start personnel in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta in Alaska wanted to create a team approach for serving at-risk children with special needs. The area's umbrella agency for Head Start partnered with an innovative in-service team training project developed by the University of Idaho to deliver a culturally relevant, mobile in-service module covering teamwork. A participatory action research project compared training outcomes of six Yup'ik teams to those of eight teams from rural Pacific Northwest (PNW) locations who took the module. Participants completed surveys pre- and post-program, and 6 months following the program. Results indicate that Yup'ik teams made and maintained gains in 22 of the 30 items on the survey following participation in the teaming module, with 9 of these items being significant. The significant scores came primarily in the categories of meetings and goals/planning. These are skills typically associated with a Western approach to service delivery and may reflect the increasing desire among Yup'ik people to live and work successfully "in both worlds." There were apparent differences and similarities between the PNW and Yup'ik teams. The PNW teams ranked themselves much lower in the pretest profile than did the Yup'ik teams and then made gains consistent with those of the Yup'ik teams. All teams made their greatest gains in increasing the effectiveness of their meetings, indicating a universal concern in this area regardless of ethnic or cultural issues. (TD)

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Learning from and Working with Yup'ik Professionals

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Abstract

This paper describes a participatory action research project carried out by three groups of people: Native Yup'ik Alaskans, the University of Idaho, and the Rural Alaska Community Action Program. The project demonstrates how respectful collaborations among these groups grew into partnerships of progress where Yup'ik educators were able to meet the early childhood education goals of their communities.

The focus of this paper is on a research project carried out by three groups of people: Native Yup'ik Alaskans, the University of Idaho, and the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP). The purpose is to discuss how these groups collaborated on early childhood education goals in Yup'ik Alaskan communities. A participatory action research process is employed as an overall study design for the project. One key feature of this process is that research is conducted (both formulated and implemented) to benefit the community. A second feature is that researchers conducting the study become involved in the local community (Dickson & Green, 2001).

The paper is organized into several sections. First, background information about Yup'ik culture is presented, followed by information about RurAL CAP and the University of Idaho. Then, sections on the study's methodology and results are covered. The paper concludes with a discussion section.

RC 023928

Culture and Tradition of the Yup'ik People

Yupiugukut: We Are the Real People

> *We call ourselves Yupiit, or "real people." In our language yuk means "person" or human being." Then add pik, meaning "real" or "genuine." We are the real people (Fienup-Riordan, 2000, p. 9).*

The Yup'ik people migrated to the remote area of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta on the northwestern shores of North America over 3000 years ago. They settled on the flat delta plain where wildlife and fish were abundant. Fienup-Riordan (2000) described the environment as being as rich in living organisms as the Nile or Tigris-Euphrates River Valleys (p.10). Yup'ik culture developed around the cyclical abundance of plants and animals. Rules for living were taught by word of mouth and thoughtful actions were thought to insure the balance of man and nature. One who showed care toward animals was richly rewarded. The Yup'ik people still believe the environment is responsive to their actions and

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attention. At the close of the hunting and gathering seasons, all families share their harvest during traditional ceremonies. The contribution of one who has less is equal to that of one who has much to give. The Yup'ik values of respect, sharing, honoring elders, taking care of others, listening with patience, and respecting shared space are continued and passed on between generations today. A great significance continues to be placed on contribution to the collective good of the group.

Fienup-Riordan (2000) writes, "The Yup'ik people built on their rich resource base, developing a complex cultural tradition prior to the arrival of the first Euro-Americans in the early 1800s. There may have been as many as fifteen thousand people living on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Following dramatic population declines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, today more than twenty thousand people call the region home—nearly 20% of the total Native population of Alaska. The Yup'ik remain both the most populous Alaska Natives and among the most traditional Native Americans (p.10)."

Since being disturbed by Europeans just over two hundred years ago the Yup'ik way of living life, interdependent with animals, plants and the environment, has suffered greatly at the hands of different cultures. "Although few Russians settled in southwestern Alaska, the larger Russian trade network to the south introduced smallpox into the region, devastating the Native population. Entire villages disappeared, and as much as 60% of the Yup'ik population with whom the Russians were familiar in Bristol Bay and along the Kuskokwim was dead by June 1838" (Fienup-Riordan, 2000, p.23).

This tragedy coincided with the introduction of alcohol to the people. Teresa Pingayak, a Native Alaskan Cup'ik and Head Start program supervisor made this assessment: "The combination of unbearable grief from the great loss of life from small pox and the introduction of alcohol paved the way for current addictive behaviors within our people" (personal communication, February 1998).

After Russia sold Alaska to the United States the Yup'ik people's problems were compounded due to the influence of western Christianity, which demeaned the values and traditions held constant and sacred for thousands of years (Oleska, 1993). In addition, the discovery of oil meant land distribution and contracts that governed land ownership. This altered the hunting-gathering customs of the Yup'ik forever. The repercussion of these changes caused the foundation of the Yup'ik society's social order to erode. The way of life involving subsistence, living arrangements, educational traditions, and a commitment to the collective good was affected and diminished.

While technology, oil, modern education, and alcohol continue to threaten Yup'ik traditions and culture, many positive aspects of the culture are being maintained. The Yup'ik language is preserved in some villages, such as Toksook Bay, where it still flourishes as the first language. Customs are celebrated in traditional festivals and storytelling is still a valued generational occurrence. Many have learned the art of documentation through writing, preserving these traditions and stories. Yup'ik people of today still find their greatest challenge to be saving the old while learning and incorporating enough of the new to survive and flourish. Evidence of this is the accusation that a prominent Yup'ik leader faced. He was accused of being "white." He reciprocated, "Yes, I am part of the western culture; we all are." He then acknowledged the technology that has changed their culture and added, "The challenge is to live in the new and retain the old..." (personal communication, September 1999).

Alaska is not a remote area of the country where the unskilled can survive but a place where unique skills are needed. The ability to walk between two cultural and linguistic worlds is a skill critical to the Yup'ik people's success. One strategy used to achieve the goal

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of living in both worlds is local control of education. Each village has a local high school that young people attend rather than being sent to boarding schools in urban centers far away from village life and customs. Yup'ik educators recognize that it is critical to provide English language and technology training programs in order for Yup'ik students to realize their full potential in the western culture. They suggest that many students suffer less from contradictions between Yup'ik values and non-Native cultural values than from a lack of a thorough grounding in either (Hulen, 1991).

It is our belief that education, both Native and western, must begin early, with the youngest members of all communities. Head Start centers staffed by local members of Native descent fulfill this function across the United States. In the Yup'ik villages, Head Start programs are staffed by locals and provide a community approach to learning for the children attending. Head Start parent classes and home visits reflect the traditional values, while Head Start standards based on a nationwide curriculum and system of service delivery help bridge the gap between the old and the new. Head Start also provides employment and on-the-job training with a link to colleges and universities that can result in increased educational opportunities for parents and staff. Head Start personnel participate in in-service education as part of their employment responsibilities and continuing education credits are needed to maintain teaching credentials.

This environment provided this research team an opportunity to practice participatory action research. Village teachers could be involved in research that would benefit their communities, the goal being to promote long-term change in Yup'ik villages. Educators had interests in gaining information and skills that would enhance services to all children and their families. Two content areas of interest were early intervention strategies for at-risk children and creating a team approach for serving persons with special needs. Also important to educators was identifying challenging behaviors due to special needs (for example, fetal alcohol syndrome, developmental delays, environmental and health risk factors). Much was to be accomplished through the research.

Research Partners

From the remoteness of the Yup'ik country came a need for a method of training that would match the particular learning styles and personalities of this culture. Basically, a need existed for a flexible and mobile in-service program. This need, in turn, triggered a partnership between groups of people where respectful collaborations eventually grew into partnerships of progress.

One research partner in the project is the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP), the umbrella agency for an expansive Head Start program serving over 1,000 children from ages two to five. RurAL CAP's administrative offices are located in Anchorage and many of its service sites are located in the delta plain of western Alaska, home of the Yup'ik people. As mentioned before, the Yup'ik area is extremely remote; there probably is, but it does not seem possible that there could be, a more remote area of our globe. As an illustration, the delta lies about 400 air miles west of Anchorage and once the plane is airborne there are no roads, except in the bustling town of Bethel (equaling in all 16 miles). Bethel provides the only airport in the region, which in turn affords access, services, and commodities to over fifty further-reaching villages.

Another research partner is the University of Idaho, home to an innovative in-service training project entitled Building Effective and Successful Teams (BEST) project. BEST staff members have produced a series of team-directed, self-paced, on-site modules for early childhood professionals. The modules are team-directed in that they are designed for a group (e.g., a Head Start classroom team of educators) not an individual to complete. Further, each team determines what specific content it will apply or adapt to the team's

work setting. The training materials are self-paced and on-site in the sense that each team schedules its own timeline and location to complete the training. These factors make the modules truly individualized educational experiences completed by a community of learners. Data collected from over 90 teams, made up of approximately 700 individual members, indicates a high level of application of newly acquired skills and information to the work setting and an increased sense of teamwork and cooperation among participants (Olson, Murphy, & Olson, 1998; Olson & Murphy, 1999).

BEST project staff members were invited by RurAL CAP to present information about the various modules. The presentation and later discussion focused on how different module contents might benefit local communities, and if the different module contents would be respectful of and consistent with the Yup'ik culture. During the discussion, the Head Start teams expressed the most interest in the BEST module covering teamwork because they needed to streamline their meetings, increase communication among team members, and strengthen their knowledge of cooperative teaming in an educational setting. There was concern, however, that the module content reflected only western European values of time management, goal setting with time lines, communication styles, and meeting norms. The format of the modules also asked participants to jointly and independently complete paper and pencil activities. It was the BEST staff's understanding, from limited previous work with Alaskan groups, that Native people were more comfortable with stories and oral communication and that they were less likely to share information with people who were not well known or who were from "the outside." Another consideration that was discussed was the usefulness of training in team development among a group of individuals whose culture values the contribution to the common good of the group above all other forms of behavior.

Key personnel from RurAL CAP, including Yup'ik members, reviewed the material and felt that the module's content fit with Head Start organizational requirements. In particular, the teams felt they could provide feedback to BEST staff, through journals and assignments, on the cultural relevance of the materials and the need for further partnerships that would benefit the villages.

Based on this feedback, an invitation was extended from RurAl CAP to the BEST project. In turn, BEST staff members extended an invitation to all RurAL CAP Yup'ik Head Start sites to participate in the teaming module process. Out of twenty possible teams, fourteen accepted and agreed to complete the nine-chapter module. Six of the participating teams consisted of culturally homogeneous groups from Yup'ik villages of 400 people or fewer. Teams received support from RurAl CAP and the individual Head Start site managers who granted the time and resources to cover the completion of the module. University credit was also offered for those interested in this option.

In terms of assessing their teamwork skills, teams are given three opportunities. Each of these opportunities involves completing a BEST questionnaire, the Team Profile survey. The profile requires team members to view and critique their team's organizational methods and team meetings. BEST staff members used Yup'ik profile data, plus chapter evaluations and completed assignments, for two purposes: 1) as an opportunity to gather information on the relevance of the teaming materials with Yup'ik people and 2) to compare the remarks of Yup'ik teams with those of Head Start teams from the Pacific Northwest that had completed or were completing the module. Four research questions were developed based on these purposes:

> Research Question One: Will Yup'ik Head Start teams completing the Teaming Module report and maintain gains as measured by the Team Profile?

Research Question Two: Will Team Profile survey scores for the Yup'ik Head Start teams differ from those of the Pacific Northwest Head Start teams?

Research Question Three: Will journal reflections, especially the team's purpose for taking the module, the ground rules they set for their meetings, and the metaphorical statements in color and art, differ between the Yup'ik teams and the Pacific Northwest teams?

Research Question Four: Will Yup'ik teaming results translate into additional training activities that reflect the needs of the involved communities?

Methodology

Subjects

Six teams from Yup'ik villages in rural Alaska and eight teams from rural locations around the Pacific Northwest, similar in size to the Yup'ik teams, participated in the research. The teams included Head Start teachers, aides, bus drivers, and cooks. It took teams about 30 hours to complete the module over a seven-month period. They scheduled their own meeting times and completed assignments and journal entries at their individual paces.

Assessment Tools

Included in the curriculum is a 30-item Team Profile that was completed three times throughout the process. The initial assessment occurred when the first chapter (the teaming module consists of nine chapters) had been completed (pre profile), the second when the entire module was completed (post profile), and the third six months later (follow-up profile). The Team Profile measures team member opinions of the team and how it operates. Ratings were scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 – 5, incorporating items associated with communication, conflict, shared accountability, planning, and effective meeting structures. The results from the Team Profile survey were summarized by consolidating the 30 items into four general categories: communication/conflict, shared accountability, goals/planning and effective meetings; each category contained from 5 to 9 items or questions.

All assignments, journal entries, and the profiles were sent to the BEST project in-service staff. The results of the Team Profiles from individual teams were summarized and the mean calculated for each item on the profile. Strengths that the team reported and areas where there was opportunity for growth were identified and documented and a summary and presentation of strengths and challenges was then returned to each team. At the second meeting (or Chapter 2) of the teaming module, the teams reviewed their Team Profile summary, and used this information to consider what aspects of the module they might perceive as useful for their team.

Training and Support

As teams worked through the module, the BEST staff provided ongoing support through written responses to their assignments or evaluations, as appropriate. These responses included clarifying questions, providing encouragement, and commenting on remarkable details from the materials the teams had submitted. Upon completion of the module each team completed the post Team Profile. A mean score for each item was again computed and compared with the scores from the pre Team Profile. These data comparisons were returned to the team with a summary letter describing changes that had occurred.

At the conclusion of the in-service team training, team members were asked to review future needs for their programs and communities. This was accomplished through an action planning activity where they addressed future interests and goals of the team. They shared their action plan with BEST staff and their administrators. It was anticipated that they would use their teaming skills to enhance their progress towards mutually agreed upon goals.

After a six-month interval, in which no contact occurred between the teams and the BEST in-service team, follow-up letters were mailed asking them to complete the follow-up team profile. Although some team members have moved on to other positions, many are available to complete this third profile.

Results

The research questions stated earlier in this chapter guide this section. The quantitative results from the Team Profile and qualitative data from the journals and other activities were used to compare the experiences of Yup'ik team with those of teams from the Pacific Northwest that were of similar size and that provided Head Start services in similarly rural locations.

Research Question One

The first research area was to determine if the Yup'ik teams reported and maintained gains in teamwork. Mean scores were calculated; the results for the three separate Team Profiles are summarized in Table 1. When considering only pre to post results, Yup'ik teams made gains on 22 out of the 30 items on the Team Profile, with the highest reported scores on the items addressing the issues of "feeling 'safe' on the team," "all members participate," and "all members are to be included in decision making." When a test of means was used to determine significant differences on the pre to post results, nine items showed significance at the .01 level. These nine were primarily associated with staff meetings, including 1) starting on time, 2) having an agenda, 3) utilizing a meeting facilitator, and 4) generating a personal responsibility action plan. Other items showing significant gains related to establishing clear goals, setting timelines for achievement, and accomplishing proposed goals within those timelines. Note that the Yup'ik teams scored highest in the areas of shared accountability and communication on the pre profile and had somewhat lower scores in the areas of goals and planning and meetings. Note also that the post and follow-up surveys show a slight decline in the areas of shared accountability and communication. Items in the goals and planning category increase from pre to post and decline slightly at follow-up. Items associated with the meetings category increase steadily from pre to post and from post to follow-up.

Table 1. Yup'ik Profile Scores by Categories

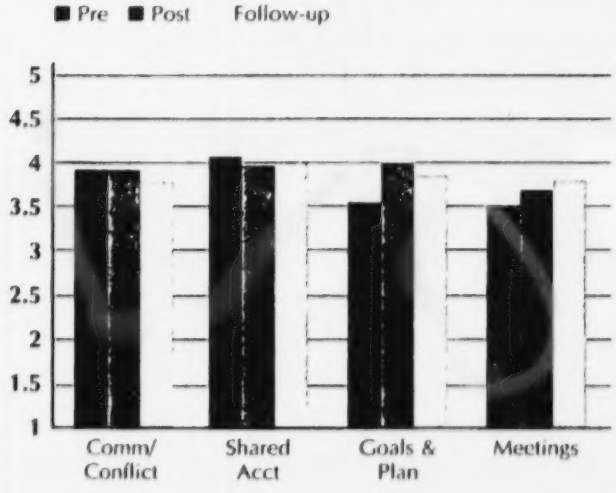
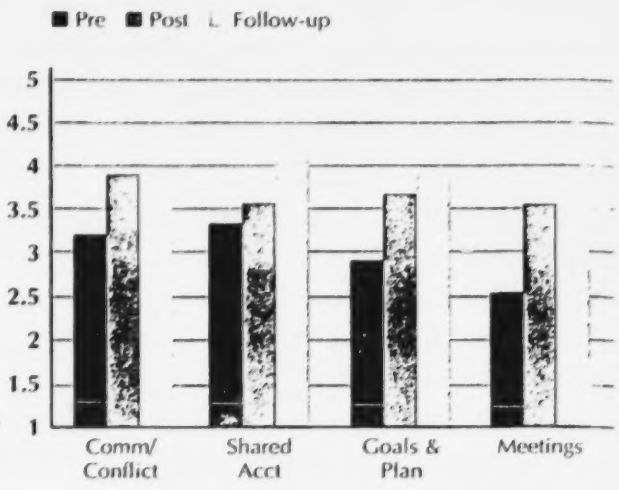


Table 2. PNW Profile Scores by Categories



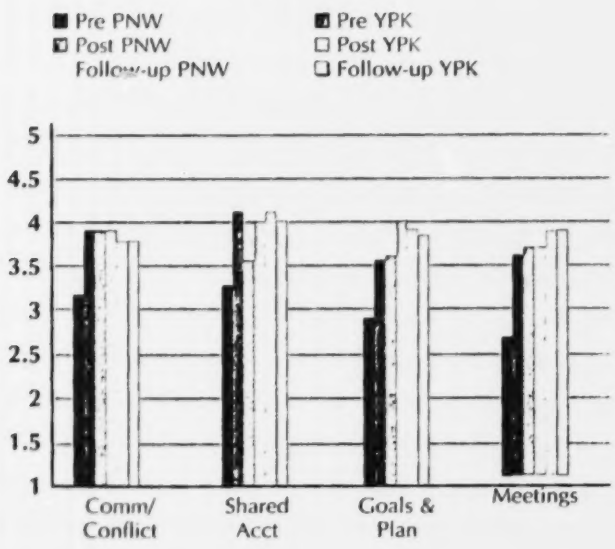
Research Question Two

The second research question examined differences, if any, between Yup'ik teams and rural Pacific Northwest (PNW) teams. Before examining differences, however, PNW team results need to be presented. Table 2 illustrates

the gains of the PNW teams across the four categories assessed by the profile. From pre to post, the PNW teams made progress on all 30 items and 29 of the 30 items showed gains at the .01 level of significance. As can be noted, the PNW teams make stair-step gains in three of the four categories, with only a slight drop in communication and conflict from post to follow-up.

Table 3 provides an overview of how the Yup'ik teams compared to the PNW teams in regard to the four categories. The two groups were very similar on the post and follow-up surveys for the meetings and communication/conflict categories. They were less similar on the pre-surveys over all four categories. Overall, the Yup'ik teams rated themselves higher on the pre profile (27 of the 30 items were significant at the .01 level of significance), with the differences between the two groups converging and becoming more similar at the post profile.

Table 3. PNW & Yup'ik Profile Comparisons by Categories



Research Question Three

Qualitative data were gathered in four areas: journal reflections, metaphorical statements, open-ended questions at the end of the profile, and action planning goals. Research question three asked if journal reflections, especially the team's purpose for taking the module, the ground rules they set for their meetings, and the metaphorical statements in color and art, differed between the Yup'ik and PNW teams. Two Yup'ik teams and three PNW teams submitted journals. Table 4 contains the results.

Figure 1 shows examples from Yup'ik and PNW team members' creations of an art metaphor of the teaming process. The original pictures were in color, and the metaphors and colors used by the two groups were different. The colors of blue, gray, and green seem to represent the landscape of the Alaskan water and winter skies, while the warm colors of yellow and red reflect the rural farm communities of the PNW. The pictorial representations again represent the culture and surroundings of the individual, and appear to be culturally linked. The detail embedded in the Yup'ik drawings may reflect the detail-rich oral stories shared by tribal members, which are also represented in their annual celebrations when masks are created and dances depict the ancient stories of the Yup'ik people. The Yup'ik team members use nature as a medium to express their feelings while PNW teams seem to use geometric figures and metaphors of growth.

The open-ended questions at the conclusion of the post Team Profile asked the team members to reflect on areas they would like to see their team continue to work on. Qualitative review of their comments showed that the Yup'ik teams mentioned communication and action planning and the PNW teams mentioned staying on task and sharing feedback in an honest manner. Both teams mentioned time limits and working together on shared tasks.

Research Question Four

The last question focused on whether the initial teaming module experience with Yup'ik educators would translate into additional

training activities. The teaming module experience allowed BEST staff to build a relationship of trust and open communication with Head Start staff members located in remote villages of Alaska. At the conclusion of the module, the partnership expanded to the development of a home visitors model for the Yup'ik villages. The team members were confident they could implement new ideas and practices concerning early identification of disabilities and developmental delays resulting in families in need obtaining services to address the needs of young children in the communities. They selected the interviewing format for home visiting, screeners for developmental delays, and helped plan the training curriculum they would need over the next three years to be successful as home visitors in their villages. Yup'ik team members brainstormed how to introduce the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), an infant screening tool, to their Yup'ik families. They used action planning to assess their training needs and set goals for implementing new skills in their villages.

The ASQ, designed for early detection of disabilities and developmental delays in children 0-3 years of age, was a key focus of BEST's next involvement with Yup'ik educators (following the teaming module). Due to the remoteness of the villages, it is difficult for residents to obtain services for their children. If a child needs testing, either a family member has to take the child to Bethel by air or a professional (such as a speech therapist) has to make the trip from Anchorage to Bethel and then fly another 100 miles to the villages. Further, travel in winter months is very weather-dependent. Travelers can be "weathered in or out" for up to 10 days at a time. The ASQ was selected for use in the villages because it can be completed by parents in their own home and can provide parents with information on normal development. In addition, parents reported that use of the instrument gave them new ideas on how to facilitate growth in their child's motor, communication, cognitive, and social development. Thus, the ASQ seemed a potentially useful tool in assisting remote families.

Head Start staff who were trained in and required to complete home visits for all the children attending their schools added the ASQ in order to give structure to their home

Table 4. Yup'ik & PNW Qualitative Comparisons

Journal Entries	Yup'ik Responses	PNW Responses
Purpose for Taking Module	Better communication To work together as a team For university credit	To become an effective team Build on strengths and recognize weaknesses Fulfill mission to serve children and families
Ground rules for meetings	Keep within time frames Stay on the subject/"no storytelling"	Communicate Be on time/stay on task/stay focused Respect each other Listen to each other
Metaphors in color (original drawings were in color)	Blue Green Gray	Yellow Red
Metaphors in Art	Figure 1	Figure 1

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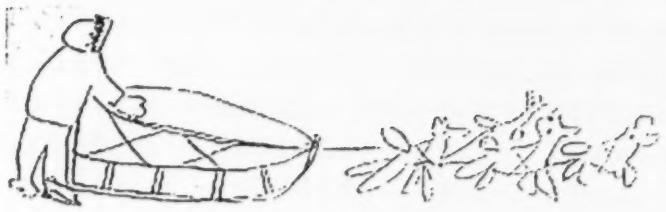
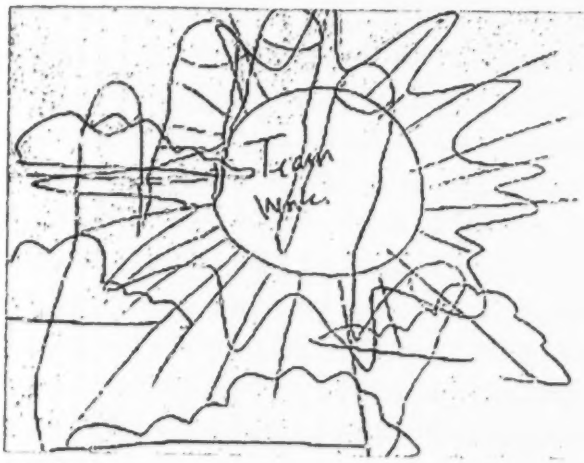
Figure 1. Metaphors in Art (original drawings were in color)



Yup'ik

Yup'ik



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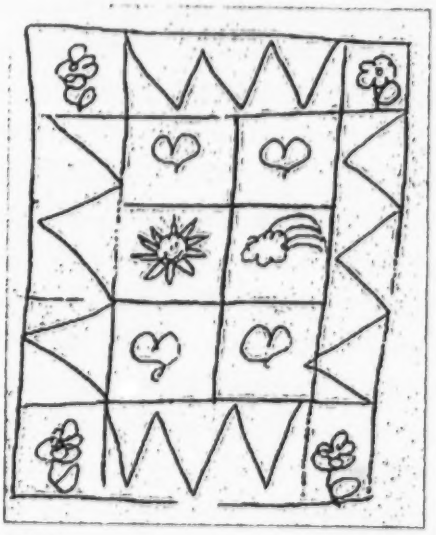
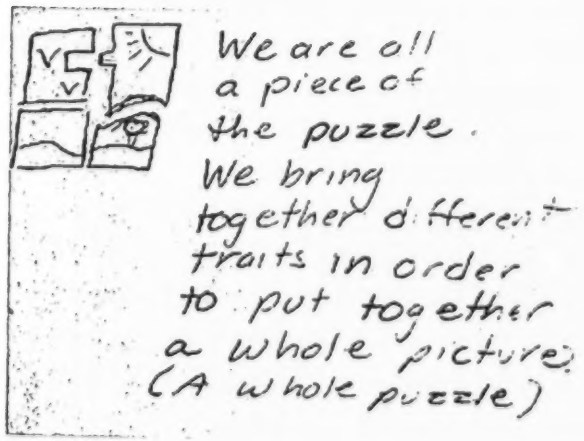


PNW



PNW

PNW

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visits and identify early disabilities or developmental delays in the young children.

A great deal of brainstorming was required to set up a model that might work for Yup'ik families. The project design determined that each Head Start home visitor on the team would take six qualifying families that had one or more children aged from birth to three years. It was decided that the home visitor and parent would complete the ASQ together to promote communication and trust. Together they completed activities in the categories of communication skills, gross motor, fine motor, personal-social, and problem solving. The family member provided the material or necessary circumstances for the child to participate in the activity, then after observation documented the child's level of performance on the questionnaire. The home visitor's role was to build the skill and confidence of the parents and to analyze the results of the screening. Each week the teachers discussed their home visits and, as appropriate, the ASQ scores with BEST staff. If the child's performances in any of the activities suggested a delay, the partners brainstormed strategies for meeting the child's needs or, in more complex cases, referred to the proper professional and services for further evaluation.

The teams continued to use the BEST teaming module format for problem solving and brainstorming. It was of utmost importance that team members understood how to develop organizational methods as well as team meetings to address the multifaceted perspectives, circumstances, and challenges that arose in the implementation of the ASQ. In this arena, the teams were able to apply practical experiential teaming experience gained from their work with the BEST teaming module. The partnership continued over the next two years, with BEST staff making weekly contact with the teams and visiting at least once a year for a week debriefing session.

Discussion

Yup'ik teams made and maintained gains in team development as measured by the Team Profile following participation in the teaming module. This outcome clearly dispels the concerns regarding applicability of the teaming material to this culture expressed in the early days of our partnership. Yup'ik team members enthusiastically offered their impressions through chapter assignments and shared their thoughts and dreams through journal entries. They told us their purpose for taking the module was to increase their ability to work as a team and to increase communication. Following participation they said they believed the skills learned would allow them to "be more open to each other." One member stated in the post profile open-ended questions that "it (the module) made me realize some staff members are not as comfortable sharing their differences because they are not understood." Now, after the module, we can "know whose duties need to be done, be more open to one another, and work together as a whole team." Another team indicated the following would occur as a result of their work:

> Teamwork and communication [helped us] make action plans for monthly paperwork for the whole staff to do all year long...not just one person doing that one thing all year long. [We will] use the team, [strategy of] set goals, plan, do, and review.

The Yup'ik teams increased from pre to post in 22 of the 30 items on the Teaming Profile, with nine of these items being significant at the .01 level. Given the initial high scores of these teams, significant gains take on even more importance. The significant scores came primarily in the categories of meetings and goals/planning. Closer examination revealed that all nine items were associated with the themes of effective use of time or goal setting. These are skills typically associated with a more western European approach to service delivery and may reflect the increasing desire among Yup'ik people to live and work successfully "in both worlds." This interest was also reflected in the ground rule of "staying on task with less story telling," which was written by one Yup'ik team member and

repeated several times in the open-ended statements on the post profile. Participants expressed a commitment to work on communication and to use brainstorming when decision making and action planning.

There were apparent differences and similarities between the PNW and Yup'ik teams. First, the PNW teams ranked themselves much lower in the pre profile and then made gains consistent with those of the Yup'ik teams. Of considerable interest was the fact that all teams made their greatest gains in increasing the effectiveness of meetings. The profile items associated with meetings relate to setting agendas, having a facilitator, evaluating effectiveness, and having a "plan for who will do what by when" at the conclusion of the meeting. These skills would appear to be more associated with the western European demand for time management and outcome planning. Yet both Yup'ik and PNW teams made the greatest gains in this category, crossing any imagined cultural lines or assumptions. Both groups recognized a need for efficiency in their meetings when setting ground rules and in the post survey open-ended questions. It appears, then, that effective meetings, including the efficient use of time, are a universal concern for all early childhood teams regardless of ethnic or cultural issues or the homogeneity of the teams. It also appears that shared accountability is a highly valued trait in Head Start teams, regardless of cultural backgrounds.

Not only was the BEST partnership with RurAL CAP and Yup'ik Alaskans productive with the teaming area, but it also expanded into other early childhood areas. The skills of open communication learned during the teaming module helped Head Start personnel share problems and concerns with the BEST staff. A major outcome of the participatory action research and project design process was the enhancement and empowerment of local teachers' confidence to meet the needs of at-risk children and their families through such tools as the ASQ.

In summary, the project resulted in building a supportive network of teachers and families that may facilitate success for the next generations to enhance their skills for being successful in two worlds, that of traditional Yup'ik and the western culture at its door. Our participatory action research project was one of partnership, built on mutual respect and cooperation, that celebrated the strong values and cultural norms of the Yup'ik people and blended the western European tools of early identification of young children at risk for special needs. Through teamwork the partners were highly motivated to perform together the *act* of teamwork and all that it represents.

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